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Carnahan is a member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

(WASHINGTON, DC) -- After the catastrophic collapse of Interstate 35W in Minnesota, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has quickly begun to address the larger issue of structurally deficient bridges across the nation. The Committee met today to hear testimony from several witnesses, including the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Mary Peters.

"The collapse of Interstate 35 W in Minneapolis highlighted what many of us on this committee have known for some time- that we must commit more resources to our nation's infrastructure in order to maintain a basic level of safety," Carnahan said.

According to the Department of Transportation's 2006 Status of the Nation's Highways, Bridges and Transit: Conditions and Performance, the U.S. is spending \$70.3 billion annually on highways and bridges. To maintain the current level of congestion and condition of highways and bridges, \$78.8 billion per year is needed. If this amount is not spent, the condition and congestion of the nation's highways will worsen. To proactively address congestion problems and invest in capacity expansion, it will cost \$131.7 billion annually. This level of investment would result in \$116 billion in annual savings for Americans by 2024 due to reduced loss of time related to road congestion.

"I am dismayed that the administration plans to ask Congress for

another \$50 billion for the war in Iraq - funds which could be better used to improve our transportation infrastructure. Instead of funding the Iraqi infrastructure, the priority should be the critical infrastructure needs here at home," Carnahan said.

In Carnahan's home state of Missouri, nearly 8,000 bridges have been identified as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, including 125 Interstate Highway bridges. The total average daily traffic over structurally deficient interstate bridges in Missouri is 3,280,648 vehicles.

Moreover, the Federal Highway Administration has listed 8 bridges on the National Highway System in Carnahan's district (MO-3) to be structurally deficient. These bridges include: I-55 North at Hillsboro Road in Jefferson County, I-64 East at Laclede Station Road in St. Louis County, I-64 East at Clayton Terrace in St. Louis County, I-64 East at McCausland Ave in St. Louis City, I-44 West at Kingshighway Blvd in St. Louis City, I-55 North at 2nd Street in St. Louis City, I-64 West at I-55 in St. Louis City and I-64 East at I-55 in St. Louis City. The collapse of even one of these bridges could have a devastating impact on interstate